Suffolk County Community College
College Brief

NO. 90   March 25, 2020

TO: The College Community

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SUBJECT: Guidance from the Office of Disability Services Regarding Remote Instruction

What follows are some tips and guidelines for remotely teaching students with different disabilities. It's not intended to be comprehensive or technical, but to provide some common information you may find useful over the next few weeks.

Some Accessibility Basics

- When creating audio or video lecture recordings, a text equivalent must be provided. For audio, this is a transcript; for video, captions. The best way to create a text equivalent is to write a script and record from that. However, if that is not an option, you can use auto-generated captioning tools like YouTube or otter.ai to generate a transcript or caption file. You will need to edit the file to be accurate; auto-generated transcripts are typically only about 60%-70% accurate, which is unacceptable for students.
- Zoom is anecdotally considered the most accessible videoconferencing system currently available.
    - Zoom: Accessibility
    - Getting Started with Closed Captioning
- When looking for and selecting multimedia for a course, choose videos that are already accurately captioned whenever possible. Note that "machine" (or automatic) captioning, which is now available in YouTube, Zoom, and Kaltura, is generally only about 80% accurate. We want to aim for 99% accuracy of captions. When recording audio or video for your course, develop a script. It can be posted alongside the media as a transcript, and can also help you to create a better recording.
- If you are hosting a synchronous class, you may consider assigning a student to take notes for the class. This will help others focus while one person documents what is said.

- Don't assume that all students can see or make the same sense of your visual display as you intend. For accessibility, get in the habit of describing whatever is happening visually on the screen.
- Asynchronous teaching, by its nature, is likely to be accessible to more individuals: Assistive technology users don't have to worry about keeping up with the pace of the rest of the class, users who benefit from reviewing information multiple times will be able to easily do so, and users who have access to slower WiFi won't be left out. However, it will still have the same requirements for accessible accompanying materials, captioning, etc. as synchronous classes. Synchronous classes should be recorded and archived if possible.
- Be aware that some students may be unable to access their technology during this time; e.g. if they are dependent on attendant care to get out of bed, turn on the computer, etc., their attendants may also be affected by the emergency. Other students with certain types of disabilities (low vision, migraines, seizure disorders, etc.) may not be able to spend extended time in front of a computer. Determine and provide a reasonable extended timeline for completing the work.
- Please do not use check boxes or any parts of social media in the course, Assistive technology will not work for the students.

Some Blackboard Basics
- Blackboard is fundamentally accessible to Assistive Technology (AT), but students vary in their skill level with AT. Please check in with your students who may be struggling with technology issues.
- Students are very concerned about how they will receive their extra exam time accommodations. If you choose to administer exams in Blackboard, you will need to know how to extend the timing options. You may also choose different methods of assessment that are not exam based. Contact the Center for Innovative Pedagogy (CIP) if you need assistance extending the time
  - CIP Accessibility Page
  - Note that an extended time accommodation is not the same as providing more time for all students; it means that the accommodated student should get an additional percentage of time above whatever other students are getting. For example, the standard test time might be one hour and an approved student gets time-and-a-half, or 1.5 hours. If the test is expanded to two hours, the accommodated student would then get three hours.
- Many of you will be scanning materials (textbook pages, articles, PDF, etc.) for students. Please be aware that students with (and without) disabilities may use screen reading software to access digital text. In order to maximize the effectiveness of these programs, when you are scanning material please use clear copies and scan in a straight vertical orientation. Use of a word document is best practice to ensure accessibility for all students.
- Guide to Accessible Document and Media Design
- Blackboard Collaborate : Accessibility in Blackboard Collaborate

Communication Access for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- For your students already using these services, Remote CART (Live Captioning Transcription) and/or remote American Sign Language (ASL) can be provided through Zoom and Blackboard platforms to cover synchronous and asynchronous courses where communication access is required.
- You will be contacted to add providers to your Blackboard course to allow these remote services to have access to your course.

Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired:

- Please read aloud all text **and** provide a description of any images used in a live synchronous or recorded asynchronous presentation or lecture (e.g. PowerPoint, videos, webcasts, images, tables, graphs, etc.).
- Chats and discussion boards are accessible to screen readers. Some students will be using phones and apps which have different access features. Please check in with your students to be sure they are able to use these features and if not consider modifying the mechanism of group communication.
- Scanned text (articles, textbook pages, etc.) should be clear copies scanned in a straight vertical orientation. The scanned text cannot be a pdf so please utilize the Sensus Access tool. Use of a word document is best practice to ensure accessibility for all students.
- As a courtesy all participants in synchronous classes should identify themselves by name prior to speaking.

Students who utilized a Scribe or Aide in the Classroom:

- Please note the College is not sending a scribe or aide to the student's home. Therefore they will be relying on their private aides or assistance to complete online work. These students may require flexibility or extensions on due dates as they are relying on another person's schedule.

Students who utilize testing accommodations (extended time, use of an electronic reader):

- Students have been notified to email copies of their Accommodation Letters to faculty so that you are aware of the approved extended time (1.5x or 2.0x). The time of their exams should be extended beyond the time given to all students. This can be done within Blackboard.
  - If a student does not have a copy of their accommodation letter, the student should email the Office of Disability Services to request a scanned copy. We cannot email copies directly to the faculty.
- You will not be receiving reminders from Disability Services or the Testing Centers regarding exams as students will not be coming to campus to take exams.
- Blackboard allows for extending time for specific students. Blackboard also has a built-in electronic reader. This reader will only work if your exam is in an accessible format.

- Ensure that assistive technologies (e.g., screen reader, text-to-speech) are not blocked from taking exams remotely. While proctoring/testing systems allow for exam security, they may pose barriers to students with disabilities.
- Students have been encouraged to contact our office with concerns related to unique accommodation needs. You may also email Disability Services on your home campus with similar questions.